

TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Volume 98 No. 19

TODAYSCATHOLIC.org

ND Coach Marcus Freeman: 'You See How Special This University Is'

BY SCOTT WARDEN

Despite having one of the most high-profile jobs in college sports – and one could argue that the head football coach at the University of Notre Dame would be at the top of such a list – Marcus Freeman admits that between he and his wife, Joanna, he's got the easier gig. After all, they have six kids – ranging from age 5 to 15 – so while his job might entail long hours at the office, weeks on the road, and considerable time monitoring players in the weight room, it's Joanna, he acknowledges, who is doing the heavy lifting.

On Thursday, May 2, Freeman visited Fort Wayne to speak at two events – first, a fundraiser for Erin's House for Grieving Children, which provides support for children, teens, and their families who have experienced a death, and second, a dinner with the Notre Dame Club of Fort Wayne, held at Sycamore Hills Golf Club, where Freeman shook hands, posed for photos, and answered questions as the crowd of 130 or so Notre Dame supporters looked on.

After Bishop Rhoades offered the invocation at



Scott Warden

Notre Dame Head Football Coach Marcus Freeman speaks at the Notre Dame Club of Fort Wayne's UND Celebration on Thursday, May 2, at Sycamore Hills Golf Club.

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Celebrating the Gift of Mothers

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Before her death in 2022, Holy Cross Sister Margaret Mary Lavonis, who for years wrote "The Cutting Edge" column for Today's Catholic, penned a beautiful reflection on motherhood for her congregation's website.

"Like our Blessed Mother Mary, a mother is someone who says 'yes' to the call to raise her children in love," Sister Margie wrote. "The primary role or vocation of a mother is to nurture and protect her children." For children, she wrote, a mother "helps to form their

values and is a major influence on their emotional and spiritual development. ... There are also those who are spiritual mothers. These women may not give physical birth to children but serve as important mentors. They may be women who step in when a mother dies or is ill, or they befriend children who lack mothering in their own families."

Sister Margie concluded, writing: "Often we take our mothers for granted and neglect to show them our gratitude. It is important to show our thanks every day, not just once a year."

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TODAY'S CATHOLIC

(ISSN 0891-1533)
(USPS 403630)Official newspaper of the
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend
P.O. Box 11169
Fort Wayne, IN 46856

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Published weekly, except for the last Sunday in December and every other week from the fourth Sunday in May through the last Sunday in August by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, 915 S. Clinton St., P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Periodicals postage paid at Fort Wayne, IN, and additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Today's Catholic, P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN 46856-1169 or email: circulation@diocesefwsb.org

MAIN OFFICE: 915 S. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802. Telephone 260-456-2824. Fax: 260-744-1473.

BUREAU OFFICE: 1328 Dragoon Trail, Mishawaka, IN 46544. Telephone 260-456-2824. Fax 260-744-1473.

News deadline is 10 days prior to publication date. Advertising deadline is nine days before publication date.

Today's Catholic may be reached at:

Today's Catholic,
P.O. Box 11169, Fort Wayne, IN
46856-1169; or email:editor@diocesefwsb.org

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FREEMAN, from page 1

Sycamore Hills, Freeman sat down with the evening's moderator, Dolly Duffy, Executive Director of the Notre Dame Alumni Association. With her first question, she asked Freeman how he managed to find a work-life balance given his busy family and demanding job.

"There is no balance," Freeman said forthrightly. "I couldn't do what I do without a strong, unselfish wife that I have at home who takes care of those six kids. ... She's like a single parent most of the time, and she's taking care of those kids by herself."

When Freeman speaks of searching for a "blend" between his roles as a coach, a husband, and a father, what he's striving for is not a balance between the different facets of his life but an integration. For example, on the trip to Fort Wayne, Freeman brought with him junior cornerback Jaden Mickey, whose mother died the day before the Irish played in the Sun Bowl last December. She had been fighting a long battle with colon cancer. Like the kids Erin's House serves, Mickey knows all too well about grieving the loss of a loved one. Freeman saw the trip as an opportunity to spend one-on-one time with one of his student-athletes.

"To be able to spend time with your players while you're doing things that have nothing to do with football, that's important," Freeman said. "The same thing, when I'm at the office, if my wife can stop by for a meal or bring the kids to practice ... I encourage her to do it. But the other thing is, I hope that Jaden, years from now, doesn't remember the things I say but remembers what he saw. And I hope that he sees me as a husband and sees me as a father, and that's so important."

In 2021, former Notre Dame Head Coach Brian Kelly



Photos by Scott Warden

Bishop Rhoades poses with Notre Dame Head Coach Marcus Freeman, left, and former Notre Dame All-America linebacker and Bishop Luers High School graduate Jaylon Smith on Thursday, May 2, at Sycamore Hills Golf Club.

hired Freeman away from the University of Cincinnati to be the Irish's defensive coordinator – the same role he served for the Bearcats. A year later, Kelly left for LSU, and the Irish brass – at the encouragement of the team's players – elevated Freeman to his first head coaching job. Few have been disappointed with the results. In his two seasons, the Irish have gone 19-7 with two bowl victories and seven wins against ranked opponents.

Freeman said that while he knew little about the university or its traditions before he came to South Bend – "When I thought of Notre Dame, I thought of football and 'Rudy,' that's about it" – it has fit him like a hand in a glove. What he's learned throughout the past three years, he said, is the remarkable quality of the people at Notre Dame and the education it offers to students.

"You get here, and you see how special the university is and what that once-in-a-lifetime education truly does for young people who embrace it," Freeman said. "So, what I'm

able to do is mask that education and hide it around this game of football."

At the dinner, Freeman sat with Bishop Rhoades, Mickey, and former Notre Dame All-America linebacker Jaylon Smith, a Fort Wayne native and graduate of Bishop Luers High School who is preparing for his eighth season in the NFL. Freeman said Smith and Mickey "would not be at Notre Dame if they didn't believe they could maximize their potential as football players. ... And so, while they chase these college dreams and they chase being the best football player they can be, when they realize, 'OK, maybe I'm not going to the NFL,' at some point they'll say, 'Oh my gosh, I got a Notre Dame education.' And that's why I've come to love this place, because it helps young people truly grow holistically."

One of Freeman's favorite sayings is that Notre Dame "will change you if you let it." He's experienced this firsthand in his faith life while he's been in South Bend. He converted to Catholicism in 2022 and told

Today's Catholic that his faith "has grown tremendously – from the community, from my parish, St. Pius X in Granger." But, he added, "I've got a long way to go, just like we all do."

Freeman told the crowd he is hoping to see continued growth from the Irish on the field as they prepare for the 2024 season, which kicks off on Saturday, August 31, against Texas A&M in College Station, Texas. Despite the success during the past two seasons, each year, Freeman said, "You start back over, and you build this group through winter conditioning, spring ball, summer conditioning, and then fall camp. I'm excited about this new group. ... I'm excited about the talent of this group. I'm excited about the leadership that this group has. We have true leaders. So now we're building, we're building. ... And by August, when we're in College Station, now we've got to be ready to roll, right? ... We're excited. I'm excited. That's why we're at Notre Dame. We're ready for this challenge. And I look forward to this '24 season. It's going to be special."

Before facing Texas A&M in August, however, there's another important date circled on Freeman's calendar: Mother's Day. He was asked what the day will look like in the Freeman home, and he said one of his "proudest moments" came recently when one of his kids – his 12-year-old daughter – remembered Mother's Day without having to be reminded.

"I was really happy that she texted me that," Freeman said. "Now, I told her I don't know exactly what to get her yet, but I was proud. ... I don't know what I'm going to do for Mother's Day, but it's going to be special."

And so, with expectations high, Freeman's wife joins the throng of Fighting Irish football fans who eagerly await the gifts he'll bring in the days and years to come.



Dolly Duffy, Executive Director of the Notre Dame Alumni Association, moderates a Q&A with Head Football Coach Marcus Freeman during the Notre Dame Club of Fort Wayne's UND Celebration event on Thursday, May 2.



OSV News photo/Regis Duvignau, Reuters

Bishop Rhoades: Health Care 'Must Be Grounded in Truth'

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC, OSV NEWS

In a statement released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on Tuesday, April 30, Bishop Rhoades spoke out about new health care regulations from the Biden administration that will restore Obama-era protections for patients who identify as transgender.

On Friday, April 26, officials with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the final regulations implementing the non-discrimination provisions of the Affordable Care Act, which they say seek to expand civil rights protections for patients by prohibiting health care providers and insurers that receive federal funding from discriminating against patients who seek treatment related to their gender identity or sexual orientation. The officials with HHS also said the regulations would respect religious freedom.

"Health care that truly heals must be grounded in truth," said Bishop Rhoades, who was speaking in his role as Chairman of the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty. By including "sexual orientation and gender identity" in the definition of "sex," the final regulations generally require health care workers to perform "gender transition" procedures in the name of nondiscrimination. At the same time, the regulations make modest improvements to the proposed regulations' protections for the exercise of conscience, religious belief, and clinical judgment.

Bishop Rhoades added: "The human right to health care flows from the sanctity of human life and the dignity that belongs to all human persons, who are made in the image of God. The

same core beliefs about human dignity and the wisdom of God's design that motivate Catholics to care for the sick also shape our convictions about care for pre-born children and the immutable nature of the human person. These commitments are inseparable."

He continued: "We appreciate that the final rule does not attempt to impose a mandate with regard to abortion. These regulations, however, advance an ideological view of sex that, as the Holy See has noted, denies the most beautiful and most powerful difference that exists between living beings: sexual difference. I pray that health care workers will embrace the truth about the human person, a truth reflected in Catholic teaching, and that HHS will not substitute its judgment for their own."

Spokespersons for HHS argued the expansion would protect LGBTQ+ patients while also respecting federal protections for religious freedom and conscience.

"Today's rule is a giant step forward for this country toward a more equitable and inclusive health care system, and [it] means that Americans across the country now have a clear way to act on their rights against discrimination when they go to the doctor, talk with their health plan, or engage with health programs run by HHS," HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement.

But Julie Marie Blake, Senior Counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom, said in a statement the regulation "is a vast overreach that turns medicine upside-down."

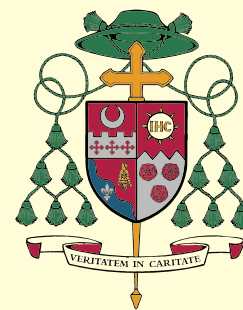
"Congress never voted to redefine sex in the Affordable Care Act to add gender identity," Blake said. "The rule harms families and children by promoting dangerous, life-

altering 'gender-transition' procedures that remove healthy body parts or block puberty. The Biden administration's egregious rule would alter the United States' medical system for the worst."

Earlier in April, the Department of Education also released its finalized regulations under Title IX, the 1972 federal civil rights law requiring women and girls have equal access and treatment in education and athletics. Department spokespersons argued the new regulations, which take effect on August 1, broaden the rules governing educational institutions that receive federal funding to ensure that no person experiences sex discrimination – based on sex stereotypes, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics – including sex-based harassment or sexual violence at such institutions.

Some attorneys general, including Mississippi's Lynn Fitch, filed suit to challenge the new regulation. They said in an April 29 press release that broadening the scope of the law could dilute its intended purpose of protecting women's athletics.

In guidance on health care policy and practices issued in 2023, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine opposed interventions that "involve the use of surgical or chemical techniques that aim to exchange the sex characteristics of a patient's body for those of the opposite sex or for simulations thereof." It continued: "Any technological intervention that does not accord with the fundamental order of the human person as a unity of body and soul, including the sexual difference inscribed in the body, ultimately does not help but, rather, harms the human person."



Public schedule of Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

- Monday, May 13: 10 a.m. – Meeting of Bishop's Cabinet, Archbishop Noll Center, Fort Wayne
- Tuesday, May 14: 10 a.m. – Meeting of Diocesan Budget Committee, Archbishop Noll Center, Fort Wayne
- Tuesday, May 14: 12:30 p.m. – Meeting of Priest Retirement Board, Archbishop Noll Center, Fort Wayne
- Wednesday, May 15: 10 a.m. – Meeting of Seminary Admissions Committee, Sacred Heart Parish Office, Warsaw
- Thursday, May 16: 7 p.m. – Confirmation Mass, Our Lady of Hungary Church, South Bend
- Friday, May 17: 4 p.m. – Baccalaureate Mass for Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame
- Saturday, May 18: 11 a.m. – Diaconate Ordination, St. Matthew Cathedral, South Bend
- Saturday, May 18: 5 p.m. – Commencement Mass, Joyce Center, University of Notre Dame
- Sunday, May 19: 9:30 a.m. – Commencement Celebrations, Notre Dame Stadium, University of Notre Dame
- Sunday, May 19: 5 p.m. – Confirmation Mass, St. Adalbert Church, South Bend



Forty Hours Devotion



MAY

St. Joseph, LaGrange: May 12-14

JUNE

St. Anthony of Padua, Angola: June 2-4

St. John the Baptist, South Bend: June 23-25

For the complete schedule, visit diocesefwsb.org/eucharist.

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Decatur Community Marks 100 Years of Catholic Education

BY JOSHUA SCHIPPER

A century of Catholic education has passed in the St. Joseph School building in Decatur. Bishop Rhoades joined St. Mary of the Assumption Pastor Father Dave Ruppert and Father Stephen Colchin, who himself is a 1965 graduate of the former high school, in celebrating this milestone at Mass on Sunday, May 5.

Catholic education began in Decatur in 1873 when parishioners began using a new church building and dedicated the former church as their first school. In 1881, they built a new school that was served by the Sisters of St. Agnes from Wisconsin.

Bishop Rhoades spoke of the history of the present St. Joseph School building and said he had shuffled through files in the diocesan archive to find some interesting facts about the school, including that builders of the current school used 1,100,000 bricks in its construction in 1924. Also of note, he said, was that when Bishop John F. Noll dedicated the building in October of 1925, St. Joseph was both a grade school and a high school.

Eventually, he said, the school became overcrowded, with 990 students enrolled in 1967. While the parish considered building a new high school, they opted to close the high school portion with the approval of Bishop Leo A. Pursley.

"I wish to commend you today for your continuing commitment to Catholic education here in Decatur, following in the footsteps of your ancestors in the faith," Bishop Rhoades told those gathered for Mass. "You recognize the importance of forming your children in



Photos by Joshua Schipper



At left, Bishop Rhoades greets parishioners of St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Decatur on Sunday, May 5. The community gathered for a Mass, celebrated by Bishop Rhoades, to mark 100 years of Catholic education in Decatur.

the faith. Yes, Catholic schools are well-known for their academic excellence, athletic and other extracurricular activities, and good discipline. But the main reason we have Catholic schools is to form our children as disciples of Christ, to teach them the faith, and to help them to grow in their faith, and to develop good Christ-like virtues. Our mission is to communicate Christ to our children and young people."

Bishop Rhoades also shared some reflections on the Gospel

More photos are available at todayscatholic.org



passage for the day, which was part of Jesus' farewell discourse

to His disciples at the Last Supper.

"Jesus loves His disciples as utterly and completely as His Father loves Him. The Father's love, we can say, flows through Jesus to His disciples. All Jesus asks of them is that they remain in His love."

Remaining in Jesus' love, Bishop continued, means keeping His commandments.

"God's commandments may appear to some to be just a list of prohibitions and an obstacle to freedom. But the truth is exactly the opposite. His commandments are directions for our life, essential and valuable rules for finding true joy and freedom. When someone loves us, they desire that we be happy. Jesus, in His love for us, desires our joy."

Continuing the discourse, Jesus said, "This is my commandment: love one another as I love you." Reflecting on this, Bishop Rhoades said that when people obey this commandment, they find joy and freedom.

"Joy is intimately linked to love. On the other hand, if we do not love, if we live selfish lives, paying no heed to God's commandments, we find ourselves miserable. Sin may bring some immediate pleasure, but ultimately, sin enslaves us and brings sadness to our hearts."

He continued that, when he visits Catholic schools, he sees a lot of joy.

"We try to teach our children authentic happiness – the joy that comes from our friendship with Christ, from remaining in His love and loving one another as He has loved us."

Concluding his homily, Bishop Rhoades said that it is important to recognize that everyone needs to be educated in love. This education, he indicated, happens at Mass in celebration of the Eucharist.

"The Eucharist draws us into the mystery of Christ the Bridegroom's love for His Bride, the Church. Here we see the truth expressed by St. John in his first letter, today's second reading, that 'God is love,' and that 'He loved us and sent His Son as expiation for our sins.' This divine love appears most radiantly on the cross upon which Jesus laid down His life for His friends."

At the conclusion of Mass, Bishop Rhoades thanked Father Ruppert for his priestly ministry of pastoral leadership at St. Mary Parish before the parishioners gathered for a celebratory lunch in the parish hall.



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MOTHERS, from page 1

Throughout the ages, the Church has emphasized motherhood – in all its forms – as a virtuous role worth honoring and defending.

In celebration of Mother's Day, Today's Catholic has compiled a selection of wisdom from popes, saints, and others meant to serve as a reminder of how the Church values the gift of mothers and motherhood.

'The Dignity of the Mother'

"Motherhood is woman's vocation: It was yesterday, it is today, it will be always. It is her eternal vocation. There come to my mind the words of a song of my country. These say that a mother is the one who understands everything and embraces each of us with her heart. And they add that today the world is 'hungrier and thirstier' than ever for that motherhood which, physically or spiritually, is woman's vocation, as it was Mary's. My prayer is that today, too, the dignity of the mother will be recognized and protected in the family and in society. It will depend, above all, on you, young people, if this happens in the world of tomorrow. Endeavour at once to look at your mothers with the eyes with which Jesus looked at His. Let her, the Virgin Mother, who is our hope, herself help you in this your resolution."

– **Pope St. John Paul II**, on January 10, 1979, in an address to young people gathered at St. Peter's Basilica.

'The Presence and Virtues of Women'

"Church and society have been – and continue to be – enormously enriched by the presence and virtues of women. ... Moreover, a woman's personal sense of dignity is not primarily the result of juridically defined rights, but rather the direct consequence of the material and spiritual care she receives in the bosom of the family. The presence of a mother within the family is so important for the stability and growth of this fundamental cell of society that it should be recognized, commended, and supported in every possible way."

– **Pope Benedict XVI**, on March 23, 2009, during an apostolic visit to the African nation of Angola.

'Witnesses of Tenderness'

"Every human person owes his or her life to a mother, and almost always owes much of what follows in life, both human and spiritual formation, to her. ... A society without



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should run to the side of Our Mother in heaven, by realizing how close she is to us, and by means of aspirations. She will defend us and lead us to the light."

– **St. Josemaría Escrivá**

On 'Spiritual Motherhood'

I would like to express particular appreciation to those women who are involved in the various areas of education extending well beyond the family. ... Wherever the work of education is called for, we can note that women are ever ready and willing to give themselves generously to others, especially in serving the weakest and most defenseless. In this work they exhibit a kind of affective, cultural, and spiritual motherhood which has inestimable value for the development of individuals and the future of society."

– **Pope St. John Paul II**, in his 1995 Letter to Women

'Eyes Fixed upon Heaven'

"Mothers, your sensibility is greater and your love more tender, and therefore you will keep a vigilant eye upon your babies throughout their infancy, watching over their growth and over the health of their little bodies, for they are flesh of your flesh and the fruit of your womb. Remember that your children are the adopted sons of God and specially beloved of Christ; remember that their angels look forever on the face of the heavenly Father; and so you, too, as you rear them, must be angels in like manner, in all your care and vigilance keeping your eyes fixed upon heaven."

– **Pope Pius XII**

mothers would be a dehumanized society, for mothers are always, even in the worst moments, witnesses of tenderness, dedication, and moral strength."

– **Pope Francis**, on January 7, 2015, during his general audience catechetical series on the family.

'Love Their Mother'

"The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother".

– **Father Theodore Hesburgh, CSC**

'How Many Sacrifices They Make'

"Look at the mothers who truly love their children: how many sacrifices they make for them. They are ready for everything, even to give their own blood so that their babies

grow up good, healthy, and strong."

– **St. Gianna Beretta Molla**

'The Gift of God to Women'

"God has created each one of us, every human being, for greater things – to love and to be loved. But why did God make some of us men and others women? Because a woman's love is one image of the love of God, and a man's love is another image of God's love. Both are created to love, but each in a different way. ... That special power of loving that belongs to a woman is seen most clearly when she becomes a mother. Motherhood is the gift of God to women. How grateful we must be to God for this wonderful gift."

– **St. Teresa of Calcutta**

'Made to Be a Mother'

"Every woman in the world was made to be a mother either physically or spiritually. Here we are not talking of physical motherhood, we are speaking of spiritual motherhood. A woman in professional life is happy when she has the occasion to be feminine. The man is the guardian of nature, but the woman is the custodian of life. Therefore, in whatever she does, she must have some occasion to be kind and merciful to others."

– **Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen**

'Run to the Side of Our Mother'

"When we were little, we kept close to our mother in a dark alley or if dogs barked at us. Now, when we feel temptations of the flesh, we

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Pope Urges Reparation to the Sacred Heart

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The spiritual practice of reparation “may be somewhat forgotten or wrongly judged obsolete” today, but it is essential for the promotion of justice and healing, including on behalf of those who have suffered abuse in the Church, Pope Francis said. With a sincere commitment to reparation, the hope is that even “if the irreparable cannot be completely repaired, love can always be reborn, making the wound bearable,” the pope said as he met on Saturday, May 4, with participants in a conference marking the 350th anniversary of the 17th-century apparitions of Jesus to French St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, which included his call to promote devotion to His Sacred Heart and to make acts of reparation or penance for the times people have not recognized Christ’s love. Reparation is a concept found throughout the Bible, the pope said. “In the Old Testament, it takes on a social dimension of compensation for evil committed,” being a matter of justice such as returning something that had been stolen or repairing something that was damaged. “In the New Testament, however, it takes the form of a spiritual process, within the framework of the redemption brought about by Christ,” the pope said. “Reparation is fully manifested in the sacrifice of the Cross. The novelty here is that it reveals the Lord’s mercy toward the sinner.”

Supporting Catholic Media Connects ‘World with Christ’

WASHINGTON, D.C. (OSV News) – The annual collection for the U.S. bishops’ Catholic Communication Campaign takes place in most U.S. parishes during Masses the weekend of May 11-12. Half of the gifts to the diocesan collection stay in the participating diocese where they support the local diocese’s communications programs. The other half supports communication activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and some projects across the United States and abroad, according to an April 29 news release. “Jesus called us to take His message of love, mercy, and salvation to the ends of the earth,” said Atlanta Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer, Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Subcommittee on Catholic Communication Campaign. “His first disciples reached hearts eager to hear this message by preaching to crowds, writing letters, and personal encounters with people they met on their travels.” Today, Jesus’ disciples “share this same message of hope through videos, podcasts, and

Eastern Catholics Celebrate Christ’s Resurrection



OSV News photo/Gleb Garanich, Reuters

Priests sprinkle holy water on worshippers during a ceremony to bless Easter cakes and eggs before a Ukrainian Greek Catholic Easter Vigil service in the town of Pustomyty, Ukraine, on Saturday, May 4. Easter was celebrated on Sunday, May 5, according to the Julian calendar, but after 2025, all Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes will follow the Gregorian liturgical calendar.

social media,” which is what the Catholic Communication Campaign “is all about,” he said.

Pope: Synodal Style Can Free Pastors to Focus on Ministry

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The more pastors empower their parishioners to share responsibility for the mission of the Church, the more they will learn to set their ministry free “from the things that wear us down,” Pope Francis wrote. “We will never become a synodal and missionary Church unless parish communities are distinguished by the sharing of all the baptized in the one mission of proclaiming the Gospel,” the pope wrote in a letter to the more than 200 parish priests from around the world who met April 29-May 2 to give their input to the Synod of Bishops

on synodality. “If parishes are not synodal and missionary, neither will the Church be,” the pope wrote. Pope Francis’ letter, which opened by thanking parish priests for their generous service, was released by Vatican officials after the pope and the pastors had a closed-door meeting at the Vatican. The stronger the sense of shared responsibility in a parish, the pope said, the more priests can concentrate on the “authentic core” of their ministry: “the proclamation of God’s word and the gathering of the community for the breaking of bread.”

Arizona Governor Repeals Ban on Abortion

PHOENIX (OSV News) – Democratic Governor Katie Hobbs signed a measure to repeal Arizona’s near-total ban on abortions just one

day after it passed in the state’s Republican-controlled Senate. Arizona’s Republican-controlled House voted on Wednesday, April 24, to repeal the state’s 1864 law banning abortion recently upheld by that state’s Supreme Court, and the state Senate followed suit on Wednesday, May 1. At a May 2 signing ceremony, Hobbs said she was glad to undo the “the chaos and confusion caused” by the ban going into effect. The Arizona Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday, April 9, that the Civil War-era near-total abortion ban is enforceable following the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2022 reversal of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision and related abortion precedents with the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* decision, in the absence of a legal mechanism blocking its enforcement. Not only is that law enforceable, that court found, but it rendered moot the state’s 15-week abortion ban that went into effect

after *Dobbs*. But the GOP legislature in Arizona ultimately moved to repeal the Civil War-era ban after pushback.

Holy Land Cardinal Condemns Too Few Calls for Peace

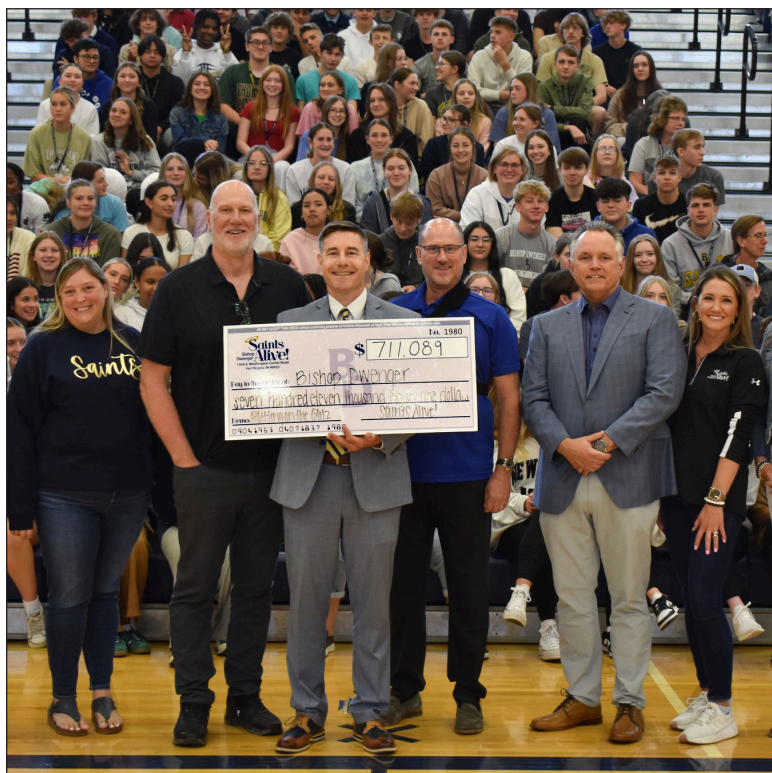
ROME (CNS) – The prophetic voices of religious leaders working to foster peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land have been largely absent as the war in Gaza rages on, a Jerusalem-based cardinal said. “With few exceptions, no speeches, reflections, prayers have been heard from religious leadership that are different from any other political or social leader,” Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, said on Thursday, May 2. When religious leaders discuss the war in Gaza, “one gets the impression that people express themselves exclusively within the perspective of their own community,” he said, whereas the Catholic Church in the Holy Land is “called to be an open road on which fear and suspicion give way to knowledge, encounter, and trust, where differences are opportunities for companionship and collaboration and not an excuse for war.” Speaking at a conference on developing pastoral practices for peace hosted by Rome’s Pontifical Lateran University, the cardinal said that while defeat, violence, and the rejection of dialogue appear to be the only options to people in the Holy Land, the Christian community “will continue to affirm the way of encounter and mutual respect as the only way out capable of leading to peace.”

Catholics, Buddhists Must Work for Peace, Vatican Officials Say

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Catholics and Buddhists abhor war, but the increasing number of armed conflicts in the world show a need for believers to take practical steps to overcome hatred and to promote reconciliation, said officials of the Vatican Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue. Writing to Buddhists around the world preparing to celebrate Vesak, which commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha, dicastery officials said, “The continuing escalation of conflicts worldwide calls for renewed attention to the critical issue of peace and deeper reflection on our own role in overcoming the obstacles standing in the way of its growth.” The Vesak message, signed by Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, Dicastery Prefect, and Msgr. Indunil Janakaratne Kankanamalage, Secretary, was released by the Vatican on Monday, May 6. Most Buddhists will celebrate Vesak this year on Thursday, May 23.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

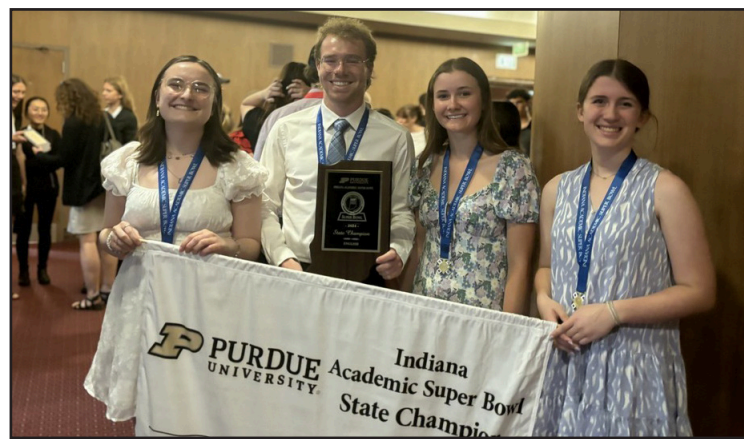
Saints Alive! Raises More Than \$700,000



Provided by Bishop Dwenger High School

On Thursday, May 2, officials with Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne announced that Saints Alive! – the school’s annual gala fundraiser – raised \$711,089. Organizers of the event, including this year’s event chairs – Jason Fabini, John Tippmann Jr., and Joe Wharton – presented a check to Bishop Dwenger Principal Jason Schiffler during an all-school rally. According to the Bishop Dwenger website, “Saints Alive! is an organization of parents, grandparents, alumni, and other benefactors collectively working together to champion Catholic education at Bishop Dwenger High School by providing financial assistance with scholarship needs, annual operational budget needs, and various capital requirements.”

Knights Claim Two State Titles in Academic Super Bowl



Photos provided by Bishop Luers High School

On Saturday, May 4, three Academic Super Bowl teams from Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne competed at the state competition at Purdue University in West Lafayette. Two teams, competing in the English and Interdisciplinary categories, earned state championships, while the team competing in Social Studies earned a fourth-place finish. The students comprising the state-champion English team were Cordelia Richert, Ella Funk, Tommy McComb, and Lily Dippold. Members of the Interdisciplinary team were Dipplod, McComb, Gerber Blanco, and Brandon Busch. The Social Studies team was made up of Busch and Rosemary Burnard. Four members of the Bishop Luers faculty accompanied the teams. They are Kathy Schall, Kate Sturm, Justin Ebbeskotte, and Alicia Baumgartner.

Catholic Charities Seeks Help After Box Truck Destroyed

BY TODAY'S CATHOLIC

Officials with Catholic Charities of Fort Wayne-South Bend announced on Wednesday, May 1, that a piece of vital equipment used to help refugees resettle in the area was destroyed in mid-April. The Catholic nonprofit, which helps thousands of northeast Indiana residents, is now asking for help.

On April 19, Catholic Charities’ box truck was totaled after a truck veered off Jefferson Boulevard in downtown Fort Wayne and into a parking lot where the box truck was parked. No Catholic Charities employees were present during the accident and the driver of the



truck walked away with minor injuries.

Primarily used to transport household items for newly resettled refugees, the 2005 box truck had been in service since 2009. This year, 300 refugees are expected to be welcomed into the city by Catholic Charities, which equates to 80-90 moves. As the only refugee resettlement agency in the region, more than 600 refugee families have been able to create a new life since acquiring the box truck, and numerous other Catholic Charities programs have benefitted from the donation drives frequently facilitated by the box truck.

Because of the age of the truck, insurance will not cover the cost of a new one, leaving

the agency with questions on how new clients will be served.

“Our yellow box truck has rebuilt countless lives and ensured basic needs were met through the generosity of our community,” said Dan Florin, CEO of Catholic Charities. “To guarantee the future of our refugee program, we are calling upon the generosity of our community once more.”

Catholic Charities has set up a fundraising page with the goal of \$30,000 to purchase a gently used box truck and support the Refugee Program. The new box truck will help a broad spectrum of Catholic Charities clients who need material assistance. To help Catholic Charities get back on the road, consider donating at ccfwsb.org/boxtruck.

Students, Faculty Enter the Church at Saint Joseph H

BY KASIA BALSBAUGH

Bishop Rhoades made a special visit to Saint Joseph High School in South Bend on Wednesday, May 1, to confer the sacraments of initiation on six members of the school community.

Four students were baptized, and one student and one teacher entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. The all-school Mass was held on the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, one of the school's patron saints.

"There's an exhilaration in that and a joy in that, seeing these individuals make that decision to be with God and to embrace the Church," Saint Joseph Principal John Kennedy said. "And it's an example for others, and it's a celebration."

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades spoke primarily about the sacraments of initiation and how they build upon one another. Baptism is "participation in God's own life," and confirmation strengthens the graces of baptism.

Addressing the candidates and catechumens, Bishop Rhoades said of the Eucharist: "I hope and pray that you will always treasure this amazing gift that Our Lord gave us the night before He died. It's the gift of Himself ... the food for our journey through life. And remember, it is holy Communion that preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace that we receive at baptism."

Bishop Rhoades then invoked the intercession of the saints and held them up as examples. "The destiny of the saints is your destiny," he reminded the Saint Joseph community.

After Mass, Kennedy led the school community in recognizing the monthly community award winners, the Saint Joseph Scholars (seniors who have earned a 4.0 grade point average or higher), and the entire senior class of 2024. The school's representatives for Catholic Relief Services also presented the school's \$1,500 donation in Bishop Rhoades' name.

Additionally, Bishop Rhoades received a special gift, presented by two student athletes: a gift bag that included a Saint Joseph Huskies sweatshirt and a stuffed husky, in honor of the school's recent mascot change. Bishop Rhoades expressed his thanks for the gift, though he also wondered aloud why nobody had voted for his mascot suggestion: the Saint Joseph Beavers. "They're very tough – just think of their teeth!" Bishop Rhoades joked.

After Mass, the bishop had lunch with school and diocesan administrators as well as student leaders. Bishop Rhoades talked with students and staff about athletics and plans for the school's future, as well as the recent school musical, "Fiddler on the Roof."

The school's Office of Pastoral Ministry managed logistics for the day. The office oversees "anything that is faith-based" at the school, as Director of Pastoral Ministry Christine Baglow told Today's Catholic. This includes daily morning and afternoon prayer, regular opportunities for the sacraments, a Lenten Passion Play, and yearly retreats. But the office – and the students it trains – also plays a large part in OCIA (the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults).

Baglow said the process usually begins when the office sends out a survey at the end of the year to the student body asking what they participated in and what they're interested in learning more about. This often encourages students who are interested in Catholicism to make that desire known.

"We try to give them an opportunity to be invited into that if they are interested," Baglow said. "There's no pressure at all; it's simply an invitation and an inquiry."

Baglow said helping students explore Catholicism is a "big priority" for her, partly because of an experience she had at a previous ministry job. Baglow knew one woman who had run Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at her parish for many years but was not Catholic. "I remember one day just saying to her, 'Have you ever thought about becoming Catholic?'" Baglow said. "She had been there for years, and this was the first time anybody had ever asked her. And that made such a huge impression on me. I didn't know I was doing anything extraordinary."

The school connects each interested student to a nearby parish's OCIA program, but there is also extensive on-campus formation. Throughout the school year, students interested in Catholicism check in with a theology teacher and meet regularly one-on-one with a Catholic peer. Baglow put the peer ministry work in terms of "accompaniment" – every pair of students prays and has conversations about the Catholic faith together. This year, Baglow said, each candidate and catechumen picked their student peer sponsor as their confirmation sponsor.

Baglow and Deacon Andy Oross, Associate Director of Pastoral Ministry, said several students recently baptized at



453 N. Notre Dame Avenue,
South Bend

574-233-6137

Year founded: 1953

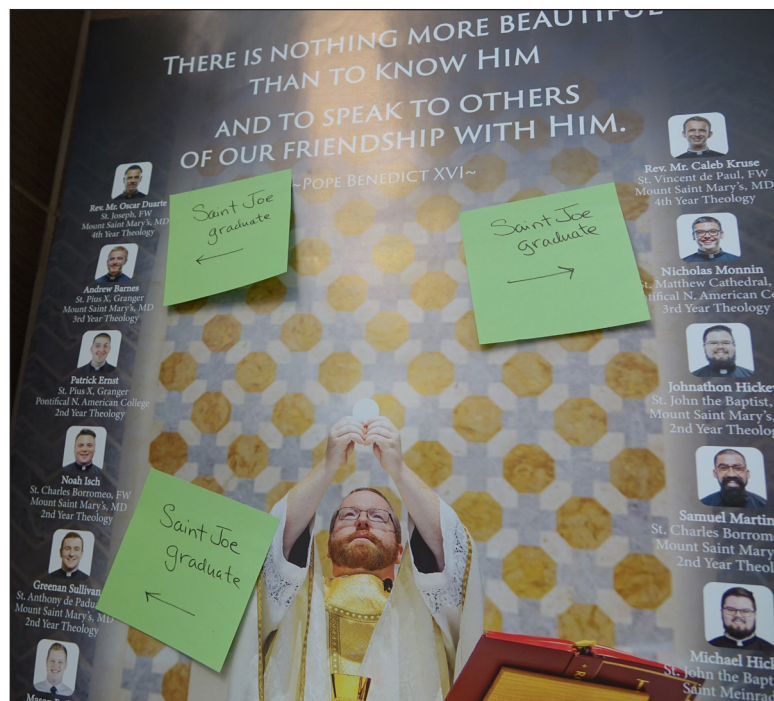
Number of students: 841

Principal: John Kennedy

Website: saintjoehigh.com



Student members of pastoral ministry listen to Director of Pastoral Ministry Christine Baglow at Saint Joseph High School on Wednesday, May 1.



Post-Its mark Saint Joseph High School alumni on a poster of the diocesan seminarians.



The Saint Joe Liturgical Choir is directed by Mike...



Saint Joseph High School Principal John Kennedy addresses the school community after Mass.



Student Jaylin Halley receives the Sacrament of Baptism at Saint Joseph High School on...

High School During Pastoral Visit



Ministry Christine Baglow at Saint Joseph



A student candidate for full communion spends time praying and preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Saint Joseph High School chapel.

the school are now leaders in student peer ministry. "They don't miss an opportunity to share how great this has been for them," Baglow said.

Deacon Oross said Bishop Rhoades was instrumental in helping Saint Joseph High School host the sacraments of initiation. Before this, every student interested in becoming Catholic would have to do all their formation outside the school. "The influence was here before that, we just couldn't really facilitate it effectively," Deacon Oross said. Saint Joseph High School has hosted the sacraments of initiation for at least the past three years.

Kennedy said he appreciates the ability to confirm students on site within the school community. "Your peers, your classmates, your teammates ... all those people got to be with them. And that's really special," Kennedy said.

Kennedy also expressed gratitude for the work of the Office of Pastoral Ministry, both on the day of the Mass and throughout the year. "We have a dynamic pastoral ministry team, and we have many opportunities for students to grow in their faith, to learn about it, embrace the Catholic faith, and to grow in their relationship with Jesus. And today was a day you could kind of see it and feel it," Kennedy said.

Baglow said watching one of the students being confirmed made the importance of the sacrament hit home for her.

"The expression on her face, being able to see her as the bishop was receiving her, it was like, she's coming home," Baglow said. "This is homecoming for her. This is a sense of belonging, which of course every person longs for."



ka Brunson and accompanied by student instrumentalists.



Students, faculty, and guests of Saint Joseph High School fill the alumni gym during the all-school Mass.



Wednesday, May 1.



Teacher Jill Jonatzke is anointed with sacred chrism during her confirmation.



Newly baptized and confirmed student Jaylin Halley is congratulated by her family.

St. Henry Confirmands Called to 'Remain in God's Love'

BY ALICIA GUZMAN

On the evening of Saturday, May 4, Bishop Rhoades confirmed 53 candidates from St. Henry Parish in Fort Wayne, and 10 students received their first holy Communion. This is in addition to the 14 youths who received the sacraments of initiation at the Easter vigil in March.

Since the parish began offering Mass in Spanish, the number of students getting confirmed has doubled. Families are searching for more opportunities to grow in their faith and sending their students to prepare for their sacraments. Each Sunday from September to May, the students received two years of preparation through formation from their catechists, including Deacon Huberto Vazquez, Marcos Romero, Leah Lashure, and Ana Cortez.

During the confirmation Mass, Bishop Rhoades peppered the candidates with questions about the saints they chose to be their personal patrons and about the various fruits of the Holy Spirit.

"Joy is a fruit of love," Bishop Rhoades said. "When we have love, we have joy and peace. Because love, joy, and peace are fruits of the Holy Spirit. And in confirmation, it strengthens these fruits of



Bishop Rhoades confirms Valarie Garcia – one of 53 candidates to receive confirmation – during Mass at St. Henry Church in Fort Wayne on Saturday, May 4.

the Holy Spirit. If we live by the Spirit, we have joy, peace, and love in our life. And if you don't remember what this homily was about, I want you



Photos by Alicia Guzman

Eridan Zetina, left, and Alejandro Guzman pose with Father Matthew Coonan, Pastor of St. Henry Church, after the parish's confirmation Mass.

to always remember [these words]: 'Remain in my love.' This is what Jesus is telling us to do, to remain in His love, because no matter what happens, He loves us, and He wants us to remain in Him."

Several of the confirmands shared with Today's Catholic about their confirmation saints and how they believe these holy men and women will help them on their faith journey.

Yamilet Casarrubias chose Our Lady of Guadalupe as her patron saint. She said she admires the fact that the Blessed Mother said "yes" to God and believes Our Lady is an example for her to trust Christ completely with her life.

Josselyn and Jaquelyn Garza, two sisters, each chose different saints. Josselyn said she chose St. Michael because she knows that the enemy wants to take us down as we grown in faith, so she knows

St. Michael will protect her like a soldier throughout her life. Jaquelyn chose St. Cecilia because she was a martyr. Jaquelyn hopes to model the faith and courage St. Cecilia showed in her short life, and she hopes the saint will inspire her to persevere in her faith no matter the obstacles she will face.

Kimberly Guzman chose St. Catherine of Siena because she is the patron saint of nurses. Guzman aspires to become a nurse, and for this reason, hopes to ask the intercession of St. Catherine to help her in her career.

Alejandro Guzman chose St. Peregrine Laziosi because he is the patron saint for those who suffer from cancer and other illnesses. He told Today's Catholic he felt a personal connection to the saint during a difficult time in his life.

Eridan Zetina said he chose St. Matthew because he was good with finance. Zetina wants to start his own company in the future and feels St. Matthew can help inspire him in his career and help him grow in his relationship with Christ because he was one of the closest friends of Jesus. Something that stuck with Eridan from Bishop Rhoades' homily was to keep Jesus in your heart no matter what the situation is because He will always be with you.

Maintenance Facilities Coordinator

Most Precious Blood Parish has a full-time Maintenance Facilities Coordinator opening. We are seeking an experienced candidate to perform maintenance, light construction projects, building upkeep, and custodial work as needed. The hours would be Monday through Friday with occasional evenings as needed.

Interested parties should provide the required information at the following link:

theapplicantmanager.com/applicants?pos=D1457

Contact Jamie Kolasinski at jkolasinski@preciousblood.org for a complete job description or any questions.

MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD PARISH
1515 BARTHOLD ST., FORT WAYNE | 260-424-5535

Receptionist

Christ the King Parish in South Bend is currently looking for a Receptionist. The Receptionist is a full-time employee who is the face of the parish to everyone who calls or visits the parish office. The successful applicant will have exceptional interpersonal skills, a friendly disposition, sound knowledge of the Catholic Church and the ability to communicate effectively with a wide variety of people. Experience in a similar position is preferred, and a full job description is available upon request.

Email a cover letter and resume to **Amy Tatay** at atatay@sbctk.com or mail to Christ the King Catholic Church, 52473 State Route 933, South Bend, IN 46637 by May 15th.

CHRIST THE KING  CATHOLIC CHURCH

 **Saint Mary's College**

Assistant Director for Ministry and Spiritual Formation

The Center for Faith, Action, and Ministry at **Saint Mary's College** is currently seeking a new

Assistant Director for Ministry and Spiritual Formation.

Contact **Christine Weiler** at cweiler@saintmarys.edu.





Photos by Alicia Guzman

Sisters Josselyn, left, and Jaquelyn Garza pose in front of the altar at St. Henry Church after being confirmed by Bishop Rhoades.

Ximena Cabrera shared that she chose St. Agnes because she is the patron saint of chastity and Girl Scouts. Despite her young age, she was deeply devoted to God – even dying for her faith. Cabrera said St. Agnes is a holy example because the saint was honest, chaste, respectful, and very courageous.

From what each student shared, they were all touched by the life of the saints and are now called to go out into the world to live out their faith. And, as Bishop Rhoades mentioned, all are called to remain in God's love.



Bishop Rhoades confirms Brayon Del Cid during Mass at St. Henry Church.

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School Principal, PreK - 8
St. Joseph School, Fort Wayne
 Start date – July 1, 2024

SAINT JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL
LEARNING TO LEAD AND SERVE AS SAINTS

The St. Joseph School Principal serves as the spiritual and educational leader and responsibilities encompass spiritual development, curriculum, co-curricular activities, discipline, personnel practices, school facilities, marketing, financial stewardship, and community relations.

For more information, visit diocesefwsb.org/school-careers

St. Adalbert Middle School Math Teacher /Math Interventionist

St. Adalbert School in South Bend is looking for a full-time Middle School Math Teacher / Math Interventionist for the 2024-2025 school year. Ideal applicants should possess or be able to apply for an Indiana Educator License in Mathematics. Experience working with second language students is preferred but not required. For more information, call the school office at 574-288-6645.

Visit diocesefwsb.org/careers to apply.



Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of CASB

Under the direction of the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences and Business (CASB) is the chief academic officer responsible for the oversight of the university's academic programming, academic support services, academic-wide policies and processes, and management of the College of Arts, Sciences and Business.

This position has responsibility to maintain academic excellence, to promote teaching excellence and scholarship among the faculty, and to foster effective communication among and between administration and faculty.

This position is responsible for the leadership and performance of the College of Arts, Sciences and Business, managing the ongoing operational, financial, and personnel activities of the college, and leading the faculty of the college in all academic matters, including continued development of goals, policies, strategy and program planning and evaluation, outreach, and partnerships. This position supervises faculty and staff of the Office of Academic Affairs and College of Arts, Sciences, and Business.

Working with the other members of the President's Cabinet, this administrator helps articulate and implement the university's strategic plan as well as develop and manage the strategic plans for the College of Arts, Sciences and Business, and Academic Affairs. This administrator may provide regular reports to the Board of Trustees and its committees as requested and will serve as administrative liaison to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board.

To be considered for this position, please submit an application at hr.sf.edu/openings

UNIVERSITY of SAINT FRANCIS

Director of Evangelization and Discipleship
St. Pius X Church in Indianapolis is seeking a full-time Director of Evangelization and Discipleship who provides coordination, formation, implementation, and direction of evangelization efforts in the parish and school community.

Essential Duties:

- Develop and implement strategies for both active and inactive parishioners
- Implement opportunities for retreats, workshops, speakers, and prayer groups
- Oversee all formation staff and programs
- Develop new Welcome and Hospitality/Funeral ministry
- Participate fully in the practice of the Roman Catholic faith

Maintain confidentiality in all parish matters

Education / Experience:

- Excellent public speaking to small and large groups
- Bachelor's degree in theology, psychology, sociology, or related field is required.
- A Master's degree in theology or other related field, or at least five years of professional experience and ongoing formal education is preferred.

Send resume and cover letter to parish@spxparish.org
St. Pius X Catholic Church, 7200 Sarto Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46240

'Father Justin' Explains It All for You

Years ago, I remember a supermarket tabloid cover story about the Vatican creating a robot priest. The image on the cover was an R2D2 type of robot with a confessional stole draped over it.

It was good for a laugh at the time, but here at the dawn of artificial intelligence (AI), I'm not sure who is laughing now.

As if to underscore the point, the organization known as Catholic Answers, which focuses on traditional apologetics and explanations of the faith, recently unveiled "Father Justin." Father Justin, whose pronoun is "it," presented as a bearded, middle-aged, AI-fueled avatar with a bit of a smirk. This digital Father Justin was ready to answer your questions about the faith, at least until the Catholic internet got a hold of it.

Reaction to Father Justin was not kind.

In a classic bit of understatement, Catholic Answers' president, Christopher Check, said his organization "had received a good deal of helpful feedback" regarding their new technology, particularly that it was presented as a priest.

"We chose the character to convey a quality of knowledge and authority, and also as a sign of the respect that all of us at Catholic Answers hold for our clergy," Check said in his statement. "Many people, however, have voiced concerns about this choice."

News organizations have had a field day with the decision to demote Father Justin to just plain old Justin. America

magazine's headline, via OSV News, read "Catholic Answers AI 'priest' laicized after backlash." The National Catholic Register said, "Catholic Answers pulls plug on AI priest." One almost imagines Father Justin as Hal in "2001: A Space Odyssey," trying to stop Check – "Just what do you think you are doing, Christopher?" – as it is unplugged.

Whether we needed a fake Father Justin is a question worth pondering.

I'm rather tired of how we are anthropomorphizing our technology. My Subaru tells me "see you" when I turn off the engine, and I wouldn't be surprised if someday it thanks me for filling up the gas tank. While human beings seem to be increasingly impolite, technology is programmed to provide some sort of ersatz human warmth.

Perhaps this is the kind of humanoid interaction that a person with Catholic questions needs, though certainly a flesh-and-blood Catholic would seem much better and more in the Gospel tradition of evangelizing and bearing witness.

While Catholic Answers has been providing just what the name implies for more than 40 years, the idea that we need some sort of fake human to do this seems both predictable and sad. Are we hoping that technology will fill the humanity gap that so many of us feel? Even before the pandemic, people were feeling lonelier and less connected to their fellows.

Since the pandemic, there



AMID THE FRAY

GREG ERLANDSON

has been an epidemic of loneliness. It is no coincidence that more humans are having relationships, of sorts, with digital pretend humans, even on porn sites. How long till we have robot partners a la "Blade Runner?"

The malleable nature of machine technology and the rapid growth of machine intelligence is certainly being explored in science fiction. What was once viewed as a threat – the Terminator's Skynet waging war on humanity – may soon be seen as our rescuer.

In the 2023 sci-fi film "The Creator," human-like robots called simulants are portrayed as perhaps even better and kinder than humans. It is the remorseless killers of the U.S. Army that are to be feared.

Hollywood will continue to spin its scenarios, but there is one truth that even Father Justin would likely agree with: While human beings are made in God's image, the technology we invent – for better and for worse – is made in ours.

Greg Erlandson is an award-winning Catholic Publisher, Editor, and Journalist whose column appears monthly at OSV News.

Afraid of Marian Apparitions? Take Another Look This May

Seven years ago this May, the Church celebrated the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Mary to three shepherd children at Fatima. To commemorate the event, Pope Francis visited Portugal, as did thousands upon thousands of pilgrims. It was a time of great rejoicing and a time of remembering, especially Mary's urgent plea to the children to pray the Rosary for peace in the world and for "an end to the war." But Mary's apparitions in Fatima, of course, form just one apparition event among many.

Earlier this year, in February, the Church marked 166 years since Mary appeared to St. Bernadette near a stream in Lourdes, France. It's been 165 years since she appeared in Champion, Wisconsin; 493 since Tepeyac Hill; 91 years since Belgium – and the list goes on. And though Catholics are not required to believe in these apparitions, the Church has found many worthy of official approval. For me, to believe that Mary, our Queen of Heaven and Earth, and our mother, continues to come to us in humility and love, calling us to conversion and into a deeper relationship with her Son is quite moving. And it makes sense, for it is what she has always done.

In her descriptive and eminently readable book "Those



NO GREATER JOY

GRETCHEN CROWE

Who Saw Her: Apparitions of Mary" (OSV, \$19.95), now in its fourth edition, South Bend native Catherine Odell describes how Marian apparitions "have always had something to do with her heart and the world's needs." Odell's highly researched text places you at the setting of each apparition, describing the "main characters" and giving context and even dialogue. She shows that what Mary brings, in her apparitions, is "part of the larger plan of her Son, who gave and continues to give salvation."

It was to this text that I turned when visiting two Marian apparition sites earlier this year – the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in southern France and the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal on Rue de Bac in Paris. Reading the accounts of the events and being in those two locations reminded me that Mary comes among us to inspire the hearts

CROWE, page 13

Through His Ascension, Christ Remains with Us



THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MONSIGNOR OWEN F. CAMPION

Feast of the Ascension of the Lord

Celebrating the feast of the Ascension of the Lord varies from place to place. In some places, this feast will have been celebrated on Thursday, May 9. In these places, the liturgy for this weekend will be that of the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

In other dioceses, including in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the feast is celebrated this weekend. These reflections will address the readings for the feast of the Ascension, not for the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

In the opening reading, from the first verses of the Acts of

the Apostles, the author speaks first to Theophilus.

Scholars debate about the identity of Theophilus. Some believe that it is the actual proper name of a person in the early Church. Others, noting that the name is the Greek translation for "Friend of God," hold that it was not a proper name but rather something of a title of respect or endearment. Regardless, the use of this name or title reveals the link between the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Both are addressed to Theophilus.

This reading is about the Ascension. It also is about the apostles, and more importantly, it is about the special role that Jesus gave them. They witnessed the Ascension, as they witnessed the other great events in the mission of Christ – the miracles, the preaching to the multitudes, the Last Supper, Good Friday, and the Resurrection.

Intimacy with the Lord prepared them to teach the Gospel. He commissioned them. The Holy Spirit empowered them.

Angels challenged these privileged apostles when Jesus ascended, telling them not to look longingly to the skies, nor at each other, not being locked in where they were before meeting Jesus, but to go abroad, taking with them the Good News of God's mercy, come what may.

Indeed, as the future unfolded, all went abroad preaching the Gospel. All, save one, were martyrs.

For the second reading, this liturgy presents the Epistle to the Ephesians. In this epistle, Paul prays that God will give wisdom and insight to all who follow the Lord. It is a wisdom too great to be native to humans. God must provide it.

In the reading, Paul extols Jesus as the Lord and Savior, supreme above all creation, including all humans.

St. Mark's Gospel is the last reading. The Lord sends the apostles into the entire world "to proclaim the Good News of salvation." He invests them with divine power, giving them authority even over the devil.

They will be able to flaunt death. They will be able to cure the sick.

They will be able to act as the Lord acted. In every sense, they will represent Jesus. The Gospel concludes that as the apostles went far and wide, the Lord "worked through them."

Reflection

Today the Church celebrates the Ascension of the Lord. This great event, so well described in the Scriptures, is a sign of the Lord's divine identity, as was the Resurrection, certainly as were the miracles.

The story, as reflected in Acts as well as in Mark, does not end with its affirmation of the place of Jesus as Son of God and Savior, visibly seen during the Lord's public ministry in the Roman province of Palestine in the first century A.D.

For us Christians today, as for all Christians who have lived since the moments recorded in these Scriptures, the story has critically strong

personal implications. The Lord, crucified on Calvary, risen at Easter, is with you and me. He is in our world. He lives now. He has been in the world, living, healing, and saving, for 20 centuries.

He lives through the apostles and their successors. Through them, we hear the Lord. Through them, we meet the Lord. With their guidance, we live for the Lord.

READINGS

Sunday: Acts 1:1-11; Psalms 47:2-3, 6-9; Ephesians 1:17-23 or Ephesians 4:1-13; Mark 16:15-20
Monday: Acts 19:1-8; Psalms 68:2-3b, 4-5acd, 6-7h; John 16:29-33
Tuesday: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; Psalms 113:1-8; John 15:9-17
Wednesday: Acts 20:28-38; Psalms 68:29-30, 33-36b; John 17:11b-19
Thursday: Acts 22:30, 23:6-11; Psalms 16:1-2a, 7-11; John 17:20-26
Friday: Acts 25:13b-21; Psalms 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20b; John 21:15-19
Saturday: Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Psalms 11:4-5, 7; John 21:20-25

Only a Human Can Tell the Truth

To be a Christian means, fundamentally, to have encountered Christ and to have allowed Him to change your life. Few understand the centrality of this personal and relational encounter with Christ better than the good people at Catholic Answers. In an odd way, that may help explain the misstep they made in introducing a customized, anthropomorphized apologetics AI in late April. The only way to interact with “Father Justin,” as Catholic Answers initially named their LLM (large language model), was to speak through your computer microphone to a cartoon avatar of a kindly looking, gray-haired, and bearded priest.

The reaction was swift, severe, and, sad to say, predictable. Critics savaged Catholic Answers for portraying their LLM as a priest, to which Catholic Answers responded by doubling down on the cartoon avatar but removing his Roman collar and changing his name to just “Justin.” (“Father Justin” had been named in honor of St. Justin Martyr, an early apologist for the Catholic faith.) Both the denizens of social media and journalists in traditional media rushed to find the right questions to ask to get the AI to make an egregious mistake, with the worst being when Father Justin agreed to hear a woman’s confession, at the end of which the bot “absolved” her of her sins. (Catholic Answers very quickly addressed that problem, and, when others tried to replicate this woman’s experience, the AI told them that it was unable to administer the sacrament.)

Catholic Answers President Christopher Check and Chief Operating Officer Jon Sorensen both acknowledged that they had made some mistakes but also pointed out that there are potential positive uses for AI even within the Church, and they vowed to forge ahead with “Justin.”

CROWE, from page 12

of believers then and now. She wants us to be active disciples of her son and, in so doing, to change the world.

As Odell writes: “It is not just individual hearts and spirits that are the goal of her conversion efforts. The Virgin is interested in the revitalization of communities and of the Church.”

What does that mean for us, then? How can we respond to Our Lady’s call? As we continue in this Marian month of May, perhaps we could spend some time not only praying the Rosary, singing Marian hymns, or crowning images of Our Lady – all very worthwhile activities – but reading about and reflecting on Mary’s appearances here on earth. What did she tell us? Who did she talk to? How

The reality is that everyone, critic and apologist alike, was correct in his own way. There are potential positive uses for AI as a research tool on matters Catholic, as such LLMs as Magisterium AI and CatéGPT have shown. And those projects have sparked very little backlash precisely because they were more limited in their application and did not anthropomorphize their LLMs, much less portray them as priests with whom you could have a conversation. A nonanthropomorphic AI trained on the Catechism and other magisterial documents, along with the entire corpus of apologetics material that Catholic Answers has produced in the 45 years since its founding, would also have made a splash, but in a much better way.

But both critic and apologist alike missed one very important reality that will always limit the usefulness of AI not only in matters Catholic but in everything that touches on the workings of the human soul. While an AI model can be judged to be more or less accurate in its answers, it can never intentionally tell the truth, not only because intentionality requires an action of the will (which AIs, it should not be necessary to point out, do not have), but also because truth is something very different from mere accuracy. An AI may be able to offer a more or less accurate definition of “truth,” but only a human can know the truth, much less encounter the Truth who sets us free, and share the experience of that encounter with others who haven’t had that experience yet.

In this sense, AI represents the apotheosis of the philosophical revolution of the last five centuries, which cast aside the love of truth that had previously been seen, by philosophers and theologians alike, as the end toward which all men and women by nature strive, settling instead for a materialistic empir-

should we be responding? How can we be keeping her message, and that of her Son, alive in our hearts, homes, and communities?

Odell’s text is a great place to begin, and it contains a helpful bibliography for further reading. It would be perfect for book club or other small group reading. Very practically, we could also take note of Marian apparition days on the calendar and commemorate them with a novena or another prayer. We could read up on the Miraculous Medal, or even begin wearing one. Maybe we could even plan a pilgrimage – either in person, or of the armchair variety – to an apparition site. Here in the United States, we have an approved apparition site in Champion, Wisconsin, that is quite beautiful.

OUR SUNDAY VISITOR EDITORIAL

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icism that enabled great scientific – and particularly technological – advances precisely because it was concerned with accuracy rather than truth. Truth came to be seen as the province, more or less, of religion only; and then as Protestantism, which arose in part because of this same philosophical revolution, confined truth to the domain of individual conscience, the concept of truth became distorted to the point where people now speak routinely and without irony of “my truth,” and “your truth,” and “her truth.”

When Christ declared Himself the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, He was not speaking of meticulously engineered maps, or mathematical calculations accurate to a hundred decimal places, or the chemical formula for DNA. He was speaking of the encounter He calls each one of us to on our own road to Damascus or Emmaus, an encounter that draws our soul further up and further in to the truth that we experience most fully here on earth in the sacraments of the Church, those channels of grace through which our souls are united to the very life of God.

We can encounter Christ when we read the Bible, and eat His flesh and drink His blood, and minister to the poor and the sick and the lonely, and lift our hearts and minds in prayer and in worship.

The Our Sunday Visitor Editorial Board is comprised of Father Patrick Briscoe, Gretchen R. Crowe, Matthew Kirby, Scott P. Richert, and York Young.

Approaching these apparitions with open hearts, as well as with prudence could reap great rewards. As Odell writes: “With all apparitions, there is a tension between authority and prophecy (the Church and apparitions) that must work itself out again and again. The tension will continue, but there is little need to be concerned that it will damage the Church, theologians assure us. Mary has assured us that she is indeed Mother of the Church. It is safe – and even necessary – to believe that she will always be near. And when the time is right and the needs of the world warrant it, she will be close enough for some eyes to see and many hearts to know.”

Gretchen R. Crowe is Editor-In-Chief of OSV News.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH®

Gospel for May 12, 2024

Mark 16:15-20

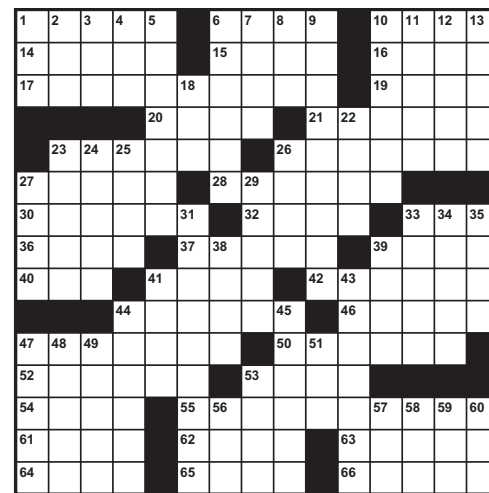
Following is a word search based on the Gospel reading for the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|-----------|
| WORLD | PROCLAIM | BELIEVES |
| BAPTIZED | SAVED | CONDEMNED |
| SIGNS | ACCOMPANY | NAME |
| DEMONS | PICK | HANDS |
| DRINK | DEADLY | THING |
| WILL LAY | ON THE SICK | TAKEN UP |
| HEAVEN | WORKED | CONFIRMED |

GO, PROCLAIM

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A Y L B A P T I Z E D M
K C I P K H N A N L S I
S O O U I A A E R N K A
A N M N M D R O G P H L
C D G E F R W I T H A C
C E Y K C I S E H T N O
O M L A S N R K W L D R
M N D T O K J M D F S P
P E A M B E L I E V E S
A D E K R O W B V D J O
N D D M M N E V A E H X
Y A L L L I W Y S C M P
    
```



ACROSS

- 1 Dismas, the Good ____
- 6 Span. lass
- 10 Filth
- 14 Take to the soapbox
- 15 Something you shouldn't put on
- 16 Ancient Egyptian life-giving force (var.)
- 17 Cantide of Zachariah
- 19 Like many an art piece
- 20 Patrick's place
- 21 "My sentiments exactly"
- 23 "The ____ Queene"
- 26 Climbs
- 27 Multitude
- 28 On the right side
- 30 Holy ____
- 32 Inter ____
- 33 Strike
- 36 Type of gun
- 37 This Jesuit has a crater on the moon named for him
- 39 Fog
- 40 Number of foolish and wise virgins in the Gospel
- 41 Recline in a relaxed manner
- 42 Twisted
- 44 Films
- 46 Standard of perfection
- 47 Ornamental shoulder piece
- 50 According to Proverbs, a gracious woman gets this
- 52 Pertaining to the mind
- 53 "... ____ to anger, abounding in mercy, steadfast love." (Ps 103:8)
- 54 Second letter of the Greek alphabet
- 55 Obstacle to a sacrament
- 61 Level
- 62 Angelus time
- 63 Reuben or Gad, for example
- 64 " ____ in peace"
- 65 " ____ grip!"
- 66 From that time

DOWN

- 1 OT historical book
- 2 Med. Christian empire
- 3 Writer Fleming
- 4 Parisian season
- 5 Catholic tennis great Roger
- 6 Holy
- 7 ____ of Christian Initiation
- 8 Movie about Capote
- 9 Serving at Mass
- 10 Crib for Baby Jesus
- 11 Course reversal
- 12 Yielded
- 13 Prayer spot?
- 18 Roman crowd?
- 22 Suffix (zool.)
- 23 Specialty
- 24 Catholic actress of "Our Miss Brooks" fame
- 25 First place
- 26 Wheel shaft
- 27 Communion wafer
- 29 One of the faces in Ezekiel's vision
- 31 Scooping
- 33 Company newbie
- 34 Religion of the Muslims
- 35 Internet good-bye
- 38 Landed
- 39 "... begotten, not ____"
- 41 "Damn Yankees" vamp
- 43 Idiots
- 44 Sci-fi staple
- 45 Catholic actress/singer Gomez
- 47 It was touched to Isaiah's mouth
- 48 Some people have a pet one
- 49 Pays to play
- 51 Turf
- 53 Puff's buddy
- 56 Stooge name
- 57 High-tech hosp. test
- 58 Aachen article
- 59 US TV station
- 60 Golfer's aid



OSV News photo/Oscilloscope

Maya Hawke portrays Flannery O'Connor in the movie "Wildcat," which was released on Friday, May 3.

'Wildcat' A Reminder of O'Connor's Enduring Attraction

BY MARIA WIERING

(OSV News) – Ethan Hawke knows "Wildcat," his film about the life and imagination of Southern writer Flannery O'Connor, which was released on Friday, May 3, is unlikely to attract general audiences.

"It's a difficult subject matter for a lot of people. They don't know what to make out of it," he said in a Q&A with media on Tuesday, April 30.

The film weaves the narrative of the 20-something Catholic writer (portrayed by Hawke's daughter, actress and singer Maya Hawke) coming home to Georgia and to grips with having lupus – a debilitating disease that killed her father and would kill her, too, at age 39 – with scenes from her always strange and often unsettling short stories, whose characters are disfigured, uncouth, and immoral. Like O'Connor herself, her stories grapple with the nature of God's grace and fallen people's reception to it.

Although the film contains overtly religious themes, it neither proselytizes nor sensationalizes faith, unlike most religion-focused films on the market, said Hawke, its co-writer and director. Instead, he aimed to capture the mystery in faith, suffering, and creativity.

"I wanted to make a movie that I wanted to see," he said. "I am a very spiritually minded person. It's the most important thing in my life. And I don't see much about it (in film)."

"Wildcat" – named for one of O'Connor's early short stories – is the latest in several

"She's so unique because she brings so many things together."

– Father Mark Bosco

recent contributions honoring O'Connor's legacy and promoting her writing, suggesting an enduring and even growing fascination with her work, despite renewed controversy about O'Connor herself.

In January, O'Connor scholar Jessica Hooten Wilson published "Flannery O'Connor's Why Do the Heathen Rage?," a look at O'Connor's unfinished novel through the lens of her other work and influences. Wilson told OSV News she hopes the culture is experiencing "a Flannery moment" beyond Catholic literary circles as next year's centennial of the writer's birth approaches.

Had she lived longer, Wilson said, "We could have seen so many amazing O'Connor novels and stories, so many essays and letters from the devout genius about how to faithfully follow Christ in our time and place," Wilson said. "We are all hungry for wisdom – wisdom we can see lived out in story so we can imitate it in how we too live – which is why we look back to O'Connor's work and bring her forward into 2024."

Wilson, the Fletcher Jones Endowed Chair of Great Books at Pepperdine University in California, plans to release lectures in the fall for "The Great Courses" on Audible "to share

more about how to understand Flannery O'Connor and her scandalous faith," she said.

In 2015, the U.S. Postal Service issued a Flannery O'Connor stamp for its "Literary Arts" series, and 2019 saw the publication of "Good Things Out of Nazareth," a compilation of O'Connor's correspondence with friends. That same year, "Flannery" – the first feature-length documentary about her life, co-directed by Jesuit Father Mark Bosco of Georgetown University and Elizabeth Coffman, director of the film and digital media program at Loyola University Chicago – won the first Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film.

"She's so unique because she brings so many things together," Father Bosco told OSV News of O'Connor. "I'm just fascinated that artists find in her a kind of muse, almost. These artists read her work, they experience her work, and they're taken on a journey as artists."

Angela Alaimo O'Donnell, a professor at Fordham University in New York who has taught O'Connor's work for four decades, said she "really is a writer who we keep coming back to."

Hawke's inspiration came from his mother's admiration

for O'Connor's writing. "In our house, Flannery O'Connor was the most important Southern writer in American literature, because that's what my mother thought," he said.

Then, as a teenager, Maya fell in love with O'Connor's writing. Her fascination led her to O'Connor's prayer journal from the writer's time at the Iowa Writers' Workshop and led her to ponder whether creative endeavors such as writing and other arts can also be acts of worship, and if personal ambition can rise above self-centeredness to serve the greater good.

"I was so grateful as a father to have that conversational door opened," Ethan Hawke said. "You could take a story like 'Parker's Back' and talk about, 'what does that mean? Why is it so upsetting?' But I was so grateful to those stories and the writing because it just provoked real family discussion in a way that I wasn't able to do on my own."

When Maya approached her father about producing the film, he said it "seemed like a dream come true to me, that your daughter would reach out to you about a subject matter that you care about." He said that he made the film for literary audiences and O'Connor devotees, devout Catholics, spiritual seekers, and fans of his daugh-

ter's work, which includes Netflix's science-fiction horror drama "Stranger Things."

In the final scene of "Wildcat," O'Connor drags the furniture away from the wall of a room in her mother's house, rearranging it into what Ethan Hawke described as "kind-of shrine," to write in the middle of her room. She sits at her typewriter, her back to the window where she used to work.

For Hawke, that scene illustrates "a level of acceptance that ... she was trapped in this home, that she couldn't have the life she imagined, that she wanted."

"But once she accepted that, she realized it was OK," he said. "She could bring the world to her, and not only did she not need to go to any fancy place, she didn't even need to look out the window."

Coffman, the "Flannery" documentary co-director, was among the film's co-executive producers. After the September premiere of "Wildcat" at Colorado's Telluride Film Festival, she told OSV News the connection between creativity and faith was a central theme in the actors' discussions. While Coffman knows evangelization was not the Hawkes' intent, she thinks the film may have a powerful impact on viewers.

"I think," she said, "the storytelling they accomplished, with her (O'Connor's) commitment to both her faith and writing, will end up converting people."

Maria Wiering is Senior Writer for OSV News.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

WHAT'S HAPPENING carries announcements about upcoming events in the diocese. View more Catholic events and submit new ones at todayscatholic.org/event. For additional listings of that event, please call the advertising sales staff at 260-399-1449 to purchase space.

Viva Bocce! Fort Wayne

FORT WAYNE – Join Catholic Community Foundation of Northeast Indiana at the University of Saint Francis' Bishop D'Arcy Stadium, 598 Lindenwood Ave., on Thursday, June 14, at 5:30 p.m. for Viva Bocce! Enjoy dinner, drinks, bocce tournament, games, and more – all while supporting the mission to provide financial support to every Catholic parish, school, and ministry in our diocese. A Mother's Hope, a ministry that shelters pregnant women experiencing homelessness and provides life-changing opportunities for growth, will be spotlighted at the event and receive a portion of the proceeds. Cost: \$200 per person, \$800 per team of 4. Visit ccnei.org or contact Lynda Houk at 260-240-5435 for information.

Summer Seminary Immersion Program

NOTRE DAME – The Summer Seminary Immersion Program (SSIP) is a two-week program for high school men who are considering a vocation to the Roman Catholic priesthood. Participants live in Moreau Seminary, with one of the best

views across St. Joseph Lake of the University of Notre Dame's Golden Dome. Coursework, eligible for a college credit from Notre Dame, focuses on developing a deeper understanding of the priesthood. The daily schedule includes Mass, common prayer, and other community experiences. Students also have the opportunity to participate in social and service activities with the students in the Notre Dame Summer Scholars Program. Visit holycrossusa.org/vocations/are-you-called/summer-seminary-immersion-program or contact Matthew Bartek at 574-631-6385 or mbartek@holycrossusa.org.

May Crowning and Picnic

FORT WAYNE – Young adults (age 21-35) of all parishes are invited to celebrate the month of Mary with a May crowning ceremony, free picnic dinner, and lawn games at Our Lady of Good Hope, 7215 St Joe Rd., on Thursday, May 16, from 6-9 p.m. We will begin in the church for prayer and process outside to crown Mary and celebrate. In case of rain, event will proceed in the gym. Little ones are welcome!

O Beautiful Mother

FORT WAYNE – Join the Ecce Young Adult Choir and Father Ryan Timossi on Saturday, May 11, from 1-2:15 p.m. at the outdoor Marian grotto of Catholic Cemetery, 3500 Lake Ave., for the Rosary, prayers, and Marian hymns to honor the Blessed Mother and to pray for all mothers, living and deceased. Bring blankets and chairs for sitting on the lawn, and you may bring flowers to place before the statue of Our Lady. There will be parking near the grotto for the handicapped. In case of rain, the event will be held in the Resurrection Mausoleum on site. Contact Jessica Schuster at jessica.schuster.155@gmail.com for more information.

Called and Gifted Workshop

SOUTH BEND – The Called and Gifted Discernment Process is designed to help Christians discern the presence of charisms in their lives. Charisms, or spiritual gifts, are special abilities given to all Christians by the Holy Spirit to give them power both to represent Christ and to be a channel of God's goodness for people. Join St. Therèse,

REST IN PEACE

Bristol

John L. Lucchese, 96, St. Mary of the Annunciation

Fort Wayne

Charles Fleck, 92, St. Charles Borromeo

Cindy Wheeler, 66, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Jaime Esteves, 80, St. Joseph

Gloria A. Sorg, 84, St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel

Maurice Sorg, 86, St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel

Barbara C. Ulman, 78, St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel

Beverly Ann Fenker, 91, St. Vincent de Paul

Joan Smith, 93, St. Vincent de Paul

Huntington

Mary Therese Turner, 69, SS. Peter and Paul

Leonard Carl Scher, 87, SS. Peter and Paul

Mishawaka

Clifton Johnson, 86, St. Monica

South Bend

Antoinette Jozwiak, 86, Holy Cross

Send obituaries to obituaries@diocesefwsb.org.

Little Flower Parish, 54191 Ironwood Rd., for a Pentecost Called and Gifted Workshop on Friday, May 17, from 7-9 p.m., and Saturday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Breakfast and lunch are included. Discounted rates are available for young adults and parishioners. Contact Brenda McDonald at 574-272-7070 or brenda@littleflowerchurch.org for more information.

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Bishop Tells USF Grads to Remain in the Love of Jesus

BY KATIE MURRAY AND
NICOLE HAHN

“Jesus tells His disciples: ‘As the Father loves me, I also love you. Remain in my love.’ As you graduate from the University of Saint Francis, I invite you to hear Jesus saying these words to you: ‘Remain in my love.’” Bishop Rhoades offered these words during his homily at Mass on Saturday, May 4, at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne for the graduates of the class of 2024.

The Mass provided the opportunity for graduates to reflect on and express gratitude for the blessings they have received throughout their collegiate journey. Bishop Rhoades emphasized the importance of offering thanks to God for His blessings, highlighting the holy Eucharist as a profound expression of gratitude. He reminded the graduates that there is no better way to honor God than through this act of praise. Bishop Rhoades said, “There is no better way to offer thanks to God than to offer this sacrifice of praise, the Holy Eucharist, ‘by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all His benefits’ (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1360).”

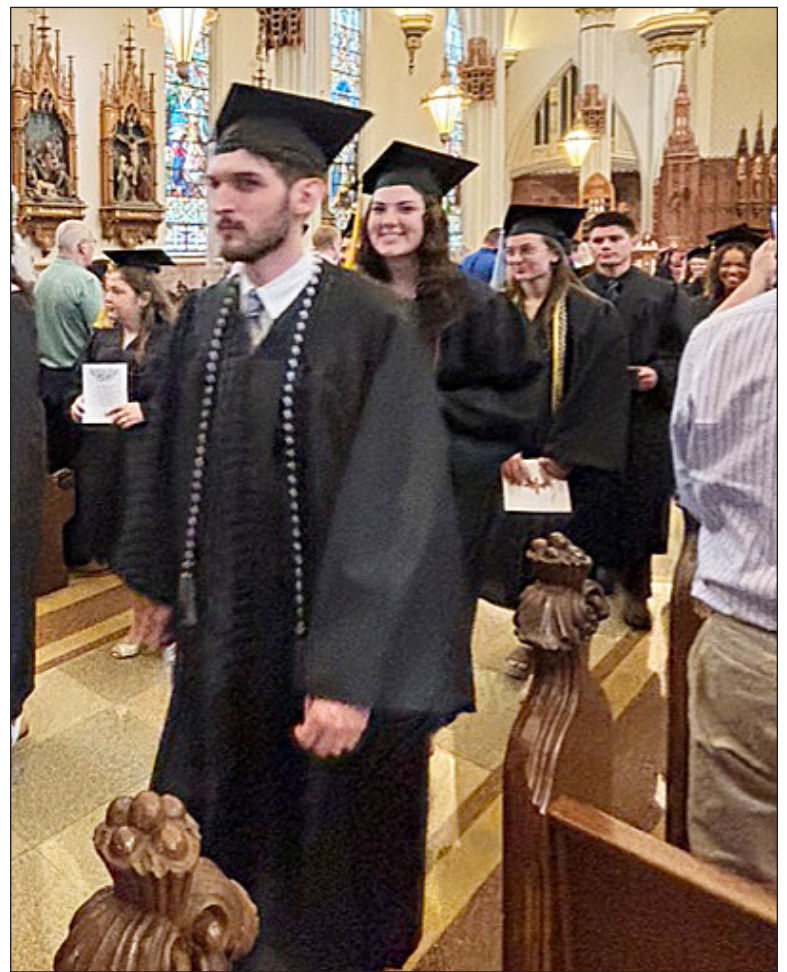
Central to the Mass was the theme of joy, intertwined with love and obedience to divine commandments. “God’s commandments may appear to some to be just a list of prohibitions and an obstacle to freedom, but the truth is exactly the opposite,” Bishop Rhoades said. “His commandments are directions for our life, essential and valuable rules for finding true joy and freedom.”

Despite life’s challenges, graduates were encouraged to seek inner joy rooted in their



At left, Bishop Rhoades poses with graduates from the University of Saint Francis following the graduation Mass, which was held at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne on Saturday, May 4. At right, USF graduates process into Mass wearing their caps and gowns.

Photos by Katie Murray



friendship with Christ, emphasizing that true joy comes from communion with God rather than external circumstances. “There are obstacles in our life to remaining in Christ’s love, temptations to sin that all of us encounter and we sometimes fall,” Bishop Rhoades said. “The good news is that the Lord in His mercy never abandons us. He always offers us the possibility of coming back to Him, of being reconciled with Him, and thereby experiencing anew the joy of His love. The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be called the

sacrament of joy rediscovered!”

Among the graduates, Katie Victoria-Carr shared her journey from Montana to Fort Wayne to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance at the University of Saint Francis. She chose the university not only for its dance program but also for its faith-based environment, seeking to continue her education in a setting aligned with her Catholic values. Post-graduation, she plans to pursue a dance career with the Fort Wayne Ballet Professional Company as a trainee.

Another graduate, Olivia

Godfroy of Huntington, received her Physical Therapist Assistant associate degree, and intends to pursue a bachelor’s degree in Exercise Science at Saint Francis. For Godfroy, the unique aspect of attending Saint Francis was the friendships she formed. She advised incoming high school seniors to step outside of their comfort zones and build relationships with others.

In his homily, Bishop Rhoades emphasized this point of loving others. “Our Lord then continues His discourse saying, ‘This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.’ When we obey this great commandment, we find joy and freedom. Joy is intimately linked to love.” He went on to say: “Graduates, I encourage you to seek this authentic joy as you go forth from the University of Saint Francis. It is the joy that comes from our friendship with Christ, from remaining in His love and loving one another as He has loved us.”

Bishop Rhoades concluded with a call for graduates to embrace a life centered on love and service, transcending self-

interest. He reminded the young men and women that their choices not only shape their own destinies but also contribute to the pursuit of goodness and

holiness in the world. He told them that Jesus has chosen them and sends them out in the world to bear the fruits of love, joy, and peace, and that the most important fruit is love.

“Dear friends, especially you who are graduating, it’s only through the grace of God that we can

possibly imitate Jesus’ radical ‘being-for-others.’ All we need to do is to remain in His love, to stay intimately and continuously connected to Jesus – through prayer, through meditating on God’s word, and through the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist,” Bishop Rhoades said. “If we do, we will grow in our friendship with Jesus and our lives will bear good fruit – first and foremost, the fruit of love, from which flows authentic joy and real peace. And we will grow in holiness. And graduates, do you know what else will happen? Your life won’t be boring. It will be a joyful adventure.”

“Graduates, I encourage you to seek this authentic joy as you go forth from the University of Saint Francis.

BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES



Provided by the University of Saint Francis

University of Saint Francis President Lance Richey hands out a degree during the school’s commencement ceremony on May 4 at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne.